

SOLID JOB GROWTH IN TULSA TAKES PLACE IN 2011



The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, along with the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission, has made reports of the unemployment rate for the Tulsa metro area. The reports showed that the unemployment rate in the area, by the end of 2011, was at 6.6 percent. The unemployment rate typically varied throughout the year, being at 7.8 percent during the month of February and much lower in April, at 5.6 percent. Of course, the rate of 6.6 in December of 2011 was actually up from the 6.4 percent unemployment rate during the month of November. However, progress was still made, as the unemployment rate was far lower in December of 2011 than it was during December of 2010, when it was at 7.4 percent. The chief economist for the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission, Lynn Gray, has said, "The big picture here is that Tulsa ended the year with nice growth." The two job surveys showed that the Tulsa area had a growth of nearly 600 nonfarm jobs during the month, leaving it at a total of about 420,400. This showed that Tulsa had growth of about 10,200 more jobs from same month during the previous year, in 2010. Within the past decade, Tulsa has managed to see an increase of at least 550 jobs during the month of December. This increase is very close to the amount of jobs that have been added during the month of December during 2011. The larger survey is aimed to show how much growth takes place when it comes to available employment and employed individuals. However, the smaller survey that was taken has shown that the labor force in the area declined during the month of December. Bob Ball, an economic research manager for Tulsa Metro Chamber believes that the jobless rate in the area for the month of December could be partly due to seasonal factors, as the demand for workers is higher during the holiday season, when more people are shopping for certain products and gifts. Ball also pointed out that there have been many signs that the economy is improving in the area, especially with the 13 percent increase in jobs within the manufacturing sector within the past year, which added on nearly 6,000 more jobs. In the meantime, employment services were also up by 7.1 percent, which is equivalent to about 900 jobs within the past year. Balls say that this is a strong increase and is yet another good sign for the residents of the area to look forward to. Gray says that manufacturing sector did particularly well throughout the year, which also made up for weaker sectors. The leisure and hospitality sector was fairly weaker than it normally is during an average December but most did not notice the weakness of this sector because of the strong growth in manufacturing numbers.

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